A VISION FOR PRESERVATION

The redevelopment of the Julia C. Lathrop Homes complex represents an exceptional opportunity to create a highly desirable and unique residential village in the dynamic North side neighborhood of Hamlin Park. Instead of the previous plan for demolition and new construction currently contemplated by the Chicago Housing Authority, this alternative redevelopment would retain 27 of the 29 historic residential buildings of Lathrop Homes. The Vision for Redevelopment and Preservation provides a vital link to the historical movements that shaped American cities. Designed and built during the Great Depression as part of a national pilot housing program, Lathrop Homes embodied a New Deal era ideal of publicly-funded, family-oriented, transitional housing for low-income working Americans.

The Vision plan, the result of a joint effort between Landmarks Illinois, a not-for-profit preservation organization, and the architectural firm of Antunovich Associates, seeks to demonstrate how the goal of the adaptive reuse of Lathrop Homes can be achieved by its conversion into desirable modern housing. The plan seeks to highlight this distinctive collection of low-rise buildings as historic landmarks in a park-like setting of landscaped courtyards and open spaces along the North Branch of the Chicago River. The adaptive reuse of Lathrop Homes will benefit all citizens of the City of Chicago and the local community by saving a cluster of iconic historic structures which remind us of where we were and how we arrived here today, a communal understanding that can enrich the experience of our own time.

The proposed Vision preserves key distinctive historic planning and architectural features, such as the rhythmic streetscape of open courtyards along Damen Avenue and the intimate scale of the traditional-style brick buildings. At the same time, it provides new interior unit layouts that meet the needs of today’s lifestyle and a site plan that accommodates parking needs. The study confirms that these solidly-built buildings, with their high ceilings and fireproof concrete construction, are eminently suitable for renewal. The generously conceived site plan of 1938 left ample space for careful insertion of small scale parking areas within the inner yards. These carefully designed and landscaped areas are able to provide parking at a ratio of one space per unit, economically resolving a key issue in providing homes that meet modern market demands.

Within the restored shell of existing low-rise brick buildings, the proposed plans – a variety of one, two, and three bedroom layouts - create approximately 700 residential units with highly marketable layouts that reflect contemporary living. Open-plan “great room” living/dining/kitchen configurations provide flexible spaces for casual living. Modern bathrooms are complemented in the larger units by Master bath suites with walk-in closets. Additionally, all layouts feature an in-unit washer/dryer and air conditioning. The units will have new electrical and plumbing services.

The proposed site plan features shared community amenities. A village green contains curving footpaths for casual strolling, a paved plaza for farmers market and community events, a tot playground, and a fountain. The village green provides a strong connection of the community to the river. A Community Center with a sidewalk cafe and other amenities is located in an existing residential building facing the events palza. The plan additionally provides a new community recreation facility to replace a dilapidated existing structure in its current location at the north end of the site.

A key element of the Vision plan is the celebration of its riverfront location. Paths and pedestrian amenities are envisioned as an important component in the reactivation and intensified use of this extraordinary public treasure.

The destruction of this historic village would be a tragic loss for Chicago. The Vision for Preservation and Redevelopment offers a practical plan that preserves an important cultural feature of our City and its history, and provides up-to-date housing in a family-friendly parklike environment. The village will become an important landmark along the river greenway, and a paradigm of sensible development that respects the environment. We ask for your support in achieving this vision.
GREEN LIVING

The rehabilitation of the Julia Lathrop homes offers the opportunity to reinforce Chicago's commitment to reducing the threat of Global Warming by recycling older buildings. The project can strive towards LEED certification as a historic rehabilitation project by implementing design strategies and incorporating current technologies. These include:

- **Heat Island Reduction**: Reduce thermal gradient differences by installing vegetated roof systems and/or high-reflectance and high emissivity roofing; shading hardscape areas, installing/maintaining light-colored/high albedo materials for impervious surfaces;
- **Reduce Site Disturbance**: Retain existing open space on-site to the extent possible and conserve natural areas along the Chicago River;
- **Water Efficient Landscaping**: Limit use of potable water for irrigation through use of high-efficiency irrigation systems and captured rain/recycled site water;
- **Alternative Transportation**: Reduce pollution and land development impacts through proximity to public transportation and providing on-site bicycle storage;
- **Construction Waste Reduction**: Limit amount of demolition material by reusing existing shell and structure of buildings.

HISTORY

The Julia C. Lathrop Homes were constructed in 1937-38 by the Housing Division of the Public Works Administration (PWA) as part of a national effort to alleviate the housing shortage for poor and low-income working Americans during the Great Depression. One of Chicago's first three federally-funded housing projects, the Lathrop Homes project was designed as a collection of low-rise (two to four story) buildings on a large plot (35.3 acres) along the Chicago River close to factories and other places of employment. Prominent Chicago architects, led by Robert S. DeGolyer, comprised the project design team with Jens Jensen as the landscape architect for the site. The buildings at Lathrop Homes express a synthesis of program efficiency and human-scaled design elements. Modular building blocks (or wings) are combined in limited number of configurations and contain repeated modular unit layouts. The buildings are sited to create a campus-like setting where the buildings are separated by smaller courtyards near building entrances and larger open spaces on the interior of the site. Mature trees are a living link to the informal landscape plan designed to unify the site and temper the site's expansive size. Architecturally, the buildings feature red and brown brick facades with limited classically-inspired detailing.

Located in the City's North side, the Julia Lathrop Homes provided housing in proximity to places of employment. The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA), founded in 1937, assumed responsibility for administration of the housing complex upon completion of construction. Initially overwhelmed by applications for the over 900 residential units in Lathrop Homes, the CHA currently administers an occupancy rate of less than 50 percent for Lathrop Homes. The CHA added a senior living center to the site in 1999.

**JULIA C. LATHROP HOMES PROJECT SUMMARY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Units</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential Units</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residential Buildings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Off-Street Parking</td>
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<tr>
<td>On-Street Parking</td>
<td>294</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Parking Available</td>
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Typical Floor Plan
1 Bedroom, 1 Bath

1BR = 651 SF

Typical Floor Plan
3 Bedrooms, 2 Baths with Study

3BR = 1,338 SF

Julia Lathrop Homes

Proposed Reconfiguration of Unit Floor Plans
Typical Floor Plan
1 Bedroom, 1 Bath with Study

2 BR = 1,116 SF
1 BR = 951 SF

Typical Floor Plan
2 Bedrooms, 1.5 Baths and
1 Bedroom, 1.5 Baths Row House
A Community Center with Fitness Center, Event Facilities and a Cafe will provide a new level of amenities for the development.
After nearly 70 years, the buildings of Lathrop Homes still convey the solid architectural character and details the designers intended. Even today, gardens that beautify the Lathrop Homes campus and common spaces continue to flourish.
Built on the brownfield site of International Harvester's Deering Plant, Lathrop Homes were among the earliest reclamation projects that viewed the Chicago River as an amenity, rather than simply an industrial transportation route. This view emphasizes its proximity to major employment centers, such as the Cooper Lighting Factory, to parks, and to schools.
The extent of open space on the site is readily visible. The project’s adjacency to places of employment and the integrative nature of the site provides a connection to existing neighborhood houses, schools and parks.

Picturesque views within the complex are framed by connective architectural features, such as a brick arcade. Building positions and adjacent landscaping create informal courtyards between the residences.

The ideals behind the Lathrop Homes project were evident in the the cultivation of personal “kitchen gardens” in adjacent open areas, an example of occupant self-sufficiency.
The original design of a modular column grid allows for flexibility in the unit floor plans that accommodates contemporary reconfiguration.